

Mr. Chairman, members of the House Judiciary Committee, my name is Jacqueline Richtmyer, & I am a Mental Health Case Manager. I oppose SB221. I feel that this bill, as written, is unfair and extremely vague. I believe that SB221 will target people who are mentally ill. Statistics show that many cases involving animal hoarding have been directly linked to people suffering from some form of mental illness. I am deeply disturbed at the thought of convicting these people of a felony when they will be completely unaware that they have committed a crime.

I understand that SB221 is calling for a psychiatric or psychological examination for any person convicted of animal hoarding. I question how this will be handled should the convicted person already have a mental illness diagnosis for which they are already seeking help and being treated by mental health professionals. Will the punishment be the same for an individual who is already diagnosed as it is for the animal hoarder who is found to have no mental health issues?!

It is not a crime to be mentally ill. I do feel however that it is a crime to punish someone with a disability when they would more than likely be unaware of the crime they are committing. I urge you to vote no on SB221.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Richtmyer  
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